Women officers in armed forces

*520. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the measures taken to induct more women officers in the armed forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): The following measures have been taken to increase the intake of women officers in Armed Forces:—

Army

(a) Annual intake of women officers has been increased from 50 to 100.

(b) Initial duration of five years' commission has been made extendable upto 10 years in case of optees.

(c) Issueless widows / divorcees have been made eligible for induction.

(d) The women candidates have now been made eligible to apply against overall vacancies in various technical, nontechnical and specialist appointments. This has broadened the selection base as veil as employability of lady officers.

Air Force

The planned induction for women candidates in the non-technical ground duty branches has been increased from 10% to 15% of the total cadre.

Navy

It has been decided to induct women officers in the Air Traffic Controller Cadre of the Executive Branch in addition to the Education Branch, Logistics and Law Cadres of the Executive Branch.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Threats of nuclear attack

3831. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: WiU the Minister of DE FENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cities which house the defence estabishments are exposed to the threats of nuclear attacks, in the light of changed security scenario; and

(b) if so, what are the measures proposed by Government to protect the properties and lives of people living in these dangerous zones?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHR,I GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government have seen media reports about some Pakistani nuclear scientists, who having defected to western countries, have revealed Pakistan Government's plan for pre-emptive nuclear strikes against India. Government have also noted from these reports the many inconsistencies that have been pointed out in the account of one of these "nuclear scientists". At the same time, such reports, proven or otherwise, vindicate steps taken by the Government to create a secure deterrent against the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction against India. Goverment have closely monitored the acquisition of clandestine ballistic missile and nuclear weapons capability by Pakistan. It has also noted statements by Pakistani leaders in this regard. Government will continue to take the requiste steps to safeguard the India's security and national interests and will constantly exercise the utmost vigilance in this regard.

Flying Supervisors lacking institutf.onal expertise

3832. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the flying instructors and senior flying supervisors